

3
Chesham Urban District Council.

REPORT

OF THE

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

For the Year 1914.

THOMAS F. LONG,

Medical Officer of Health.

To the Chairman and Members of the Chesham Urban District Council.

GENTLEMEN,

I have the pleasure of presenting for your perusal my eighteenth annual report on the general health of your district, the time under consideration being the year 1914.

As is now my usual custom, I shall keep as closely as possible to the headings as laid down by the Local Government Board in their Memorandum to Medical Officers in the Preparation of their Annual Reports.

Physical Features and General Character of the District.

These do not alter, with the exception of a few, very few, larger houses on the hills. Chesham is, and I think always will be, a manufacturing centre, and a manufacturing centre only. There was a time when I thought that the hills around would develop, and that in consequence a residential population might spring up, so that the town might not be absolutely dependent on its own manufactures for its existence. Such does not appear to be the case. This is, I think, due to many causes, the two principal of which are the town not being on the main line, necessitating a change by most trains from Town at Chalfont, and, secondly, want of either capital or enterprise, possibly both, on the part of the owners of property in this district.

As far as one can see the houses of all classes let as soon as they are erected, and one is constantly hearing inquiries made by would-be tenants as to the possibility of obtaining a residence in this district, and yet the town does not grow.

Population.

At the last census, 1911, your population was estimated at 8,204; at the middle of 1914, three years after, I estimate the number of your inhabitants at 8,384; an increase of 180 in three years. This is very much below the standard of ten years ago, when your population went on increasing year after year by practically 100 a year.

The social condition of the inhabitants is at the present certainly improving. This year ended with the amount of work in the town of all classes being possibly 75 per cent. better than is usual at that time of year. While work has been plentiful, wages have been better, so that in spite of the increased cost of living the town has, I think, so far come well out of the struggle. As to what the future will be, remains to be seen, but I certainly am of opinion that at present the prospect in front of the town seems particularly bright.

I am informed by Mr. Sharpe, the Relieving Officer, that during the year 207 of the inhabitants have received Poor Law relief in one shape or another; this is an increase of 27 on last year's figures. The figures are made up as follows: Men, 45; women, 97; children, 65; and mean that one in 40 has been helped in this way. The average for the three preceding years being:

1911		1 in 33
1912		1 in 31
1913		1 in 46
1914		1 in 40

Forms of Gratuitous Medical Relief in the District.

In my report of last year I mentioned two institutions which were carrying on work of this kind in your district, viz., the Chesham Cottage Hospital and the District Nurses' Committee. Both these institutions have, during the year, lost their chief worker. In the case of the Cottage Hospital this is, we trust, only a temporary loss, and that when the country no longer requires her services at Lincoln Military Hospital, our Matron (Miss Taylor) may be restored to us. In the meantime the work is being well carried on by Nurse Carren, who slipped into the breach, and apparently neither the Hospital nor patients are suffering. With regard to Nurse Islip the case is different, she having resigned her appointment during the year owing to ill-health. I am sure that the thanks of this Council are due to her for many instances of gratuitous help during the 14 years that she acted as District Nurse in our town.

Both institutions are carrying on their work in the town, I believe, in the same condition of want of funds, as usually characterises such institutions.

Water Supply.

There has been no alteration in this during the year. The town is still practically entirely supplied from its own pumping station by means of the two reservoirs I mentioned last year.

The supply is ample and the quality good, although perhaps a trifle hard, while, the chances of contamination are practically nil.

No sample has been submitted for chemical analysis during the year.

The daily average supplied during the year has been 287,000 gallons. During the year 190 yards of water main have been added.

Rivers and Streams.

During the early part of the year there was again a slight recurrence of our trouble caused by spring water finding its way into the town sewers, and from them overflowing from the ventilators.

Drainage and Sewerage.

During the year the main sewers have been relaid in the following roads: Broad-street, Berkhamstead-road, Vale-road, Nashleigh-hill, Essex-road, George-street, Alexander-street, Hivings-hill, and parts of Sunnyside-road and Bellingdon-road.

In each case the old earthenware pipes were replaced by iron, and all the inspection chambers were rendered and made water-tight. I am afraid that even now our trouble is not at an end, and that still more of this work will be necessary.

As far as the house drains are concerned, I am still of opinion that it is not at all improbable that a lot of our trouble with regard to the flooding of the sewers may be caused by these, and would strongly urge that such steps be taken as will ensure these being put in a proper state of preservation. I know the difficulties that are in the way, but it seems to me that sooner or

later you will be compelled to face them, and, in my opinion, it may as well be soon as later. There is no doubt but that you will have to stop the flooding of the sewers in some way, and if, as I believe, they are helping to cause it, the sooner they are dealt with the better. To my mind it would be cheaper in the end to do the work at the expense of the town than to spend the money in defending actions; you would have at least something tangible to show for your money. I am indebted to your Surveyor, Mr. Dormer, for the following table, showing the lengths and diameter of the different sewers laid during the years 1914 and 1912, also the cast iron sewers laid during 1910.

NEW CAST IRON SEWERS LAID IN 1914.

Street.	Length in yds.	Dia- meter.	Length in lineal yds. of 6in. by 1in. house drain laid at same time.
Broad-street ...	294	12"	206
Berkhampstead-road	417	12"	} 284
ditto ditto	272	9"	
Vale-road ...	217	9"	144
Nashleigh-hill ...	110	9"	19
Essex-road ...	114	9"	53
George-street ...	66	9"	20
Alexander-street ...	52	9"	15
Hivings-hill ...	84	9"	38
Sunnyside-road ...	—	—	53
Bellingdon-road ...	—	—	141

NEW CAST IRON SEWERS LAID IN 1912.

Sunnyside-road ...	240	9"	132
Higham-road ...	311	9"	118
Fuller's-hill ...	360	6"	—

NEW CAST IRON SEWERS LAID IN 1910.

Amersham-road ...	130	9"	—
Missenden-road ...	66	9"	—
Pednor-road ...	70	9"	—
Church-street ...	191	9"	—
Bellingdon-road ...	436	9"	—
Sunnyside-road ...	62	9"	—

Water Closet Accommodation.

This is, I consider, quite satisfactory. There still exist in the town 6 cesspools and 8 earth closets, but in each instance it is a matter of absolute necessity, as they are so situated that it is impossible to drain them into the sewer. Among the old property there still exist some instances where two cottages have to share the same sanitary convenience, but in all new property each cottage has its own accommodation. This is, of course, as it should be, and I trust the town will never again allow the old method to come to the fore.

Sewage Farm.

This consists of 13½ acres of land, which is, I believe, quite capable of the work put upon it. During the year there have been complaints from the Thames Conservancy authorities on account of the amount of fungus in the effluent. This has been met by placing iron wire mesh screens to try to prevent it from finding its way into the river, but I am afraid the complaints are still coming in. I cannot help thinking that this authority, with its vast experience of such matters, must, if there is any method of

preventing this, be well acquainted with it. Under these circumstances surely it would be far better for them to direct us in the matter, instead of riding the high horse and saying it is for you to find it out. Of course if they know of no method, they can hardly advise, but even then it seems absurd for an authority like the Thames Conservancy to be continually finding fault with a condition which they know it is impossible to prevent.

Scavenging.

The house refuse is collected twice a week in the Council's own carts, and carried to a tip outside the town boundary.

I am still not satisfied with the manner in which this is done. In my previous reports I have brought to your notice the numerous receptacles that are used for this purpose. One sees them on Tuesday and Friday mornings littering up the sides of our pavements; any old box or tin, sound or otherwise, placed in such a condition that a vehicle passing will turn the lot into the road. This is not sanitary nor is it safe. I have, when riding my bicycle on a dark morning, found myself almost on top of one of these before noticing its existence. I would strongly urge you to at once take such steps as will abate this nuisance, and insist on each house being provided with a properly covered dust bin. This having been done, I would suggest that you at once give the necessary instructions to your men as will compel the proper collection, not from the road, but from the back of the premises.* For this purpose I do not consider that the present carts as used at all suitable, even when covered in with a tarpaulin, which, as far as I can see, is not used.

Sanitary Inspection of the District.

During the year the number of complaints received has been ...	0
Houses and premises inspected ...	3,955
Number of notices and letters sent ...	125
Number of defects found ...	207
Number of statutory notices served ...	6
Summonses ...	2

Premises and Occupations which can be Controlled by Bye-Laws and Regulations.

Slaughter Houses.

The number on the register is 8.

In all, 165 visits have been paid to these premises, and 399 carcasses inspected. Of this number, 6 carcasses, or parts of carcasses, have been voluntarily surrendered.

It has always been the custom in the past in these cases to act as follows:—In the event of the Sanitary Inspector finding a carcass with which he was not satisfied, he at once called in the Medical Officer of Health. The two then proceeded to the slaughter-house and, meeting the owner of the carcass, directed how much, if any, of the carcass was unfit for human food. It was thought that by acting in this way publicity was avoided, and the case has been settled without friction.

Owing to the case of Mead v. the Chesham Urban District Council, which was pending at

*I am pleased to notice that since this report was written these instructions have been given.

the end of the year, it appears to me very doubtful if it will be wise for your officers to take this course in future. If directly your Sanitary Inspector, in the course of his duties, comes across what he considers meat which is unfit for human consumption, on the premises of a butcher, and takes the necessary proceedings of having it put aside for further inspection, you as a Council are to have an action for damages brought against you in the event of a second opinion not agreeing with his (the Sanitary Inspector's), the only way of meeting the case will be, as far as I can see, for the Sanitary Inspector to say nothing, but to remain on the premises while the Medical Officer of Health is fetched. In the event of the two officials being of the same opinion, they must at once proceed to a magistrate and take the necessary steps of having the carcase condemned.

All this will of course be very hard on the butcher who may have, and probably has, paid a good price for the beast. The report will at once go round the town that this certain butcher sells bad meat and some of it has been condemned, but under the circumstances I hardly see how it is to be avoided. I am quite open to suggestion, and would meet the members of this particular trade to discuss the matter with them to see what arrangement could be arrived at.

To my mind the proper solution of the difficulty would be the erection of a public slaughter-house and the scrapping of all existing ones. Your Inspector could then be present and see all carcases before they left the building, and if any were unsatisfactory the necessary proceeding could be taken quietly and, unless the butcher himself chose to talk about it, which would be unlikely, the general public would not know to whom the carcase belonged, even if they heard that one had been condemned.

Bakehouses.

There are 14 of these on the register, but two are at present unoccupied.

During the year 41 visits have been paid and 14 requests made for lime-washing, all of which were complied with.

Owing to several of the bakchouses in the town having adopted power in some form or another they have become factories, and are therefore inspected by the Factory Inspector.

In the month of September a notice was received from the Home Office that one of the bakehouses had not been lime-washed. Your Sanitary Inspector had an interview with the Home Office Inspector, and pointed out to him that it has always been the custom in this district to leave the autumn lime-washing until such time as the ordinary house-fly, that is so numerous in these places, has departed, the reason being that if the lime-washing is done before this the bakehouse in a few days is as bad as ever. This appears to me a very reasonable attitude to take up, and I do not propose that it shall be altered.

Common Lodging-Houses.

Seven visits have been paid to the two lodging-houses in the district. One of them appears to be carried on in a satisfactory manner,

but from the report of your Sanitary Inspector there will have to be a considerable improvement in the other.

Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops.

Thirty visits have been paid to cowsheds during the year, and 40 to premises of purveyors of milk. Seven requests to lime-wash cow-sheds have been complied with.

Factories and Workshops.

Number of factories on the register, 56.

Number of workshops on the register, 54.

Number of visits paid to these premises, 93.

Number of complaints from H. M. Inspector of Factories, 12.

Number of same attended to, 10.

Requests made for list of out-workers, 10.

Number of lists of out-workers (once a year), 12.

Number of lists of out-workers (twice a year), 3.

Number of names received as out workers, 118.

Number of names of out-workers sent to other districts, 1.

Number of names received from other districts, 0.

The manner in which Section 107c of the Factory and Workshops Act is complied with is far from satisfactory. Employers of labour in this district do not seem to realise that this section of the Act compels them to send to the Sanitary Authority before the first day of February and August in each year a list of those persons that he has employed as out-workers during the previous six months, and that by failing to do so they are laying themselves open to a fine not exceeding forty shillings, and in the case of a second or subsequent offence not exceeding five pounds. No action has been taken in the matter in the past, but I fear nothing but a prosecution will cure these bad memories.

I think a final notice should be sent to all employers of labour in the district who come under the Act, notifying them that if this section of the Act is not complied with that action will be taken and that no further notice will be given or request made.

Schools.

There are ten elementary schools in your district. These have all been visited from time to time during the year when any disease of an infectious character has been notified. During the year the chief cause of nearly all our troubles in this particular has been Whitehill, while Townsend-road, of which I have had so often to complain, has remained practically free.

During the year I have seen reason to alter my opinion with regard to the opening and closing schools during an epidemic. In the past, as most of you are aware, I have always been a strong advocate for closing them. Owing to the work of your Sanitary Inspector during the epidemic of scarlet fever which visited us during the autumn, I have completely altered my opinion. Mr. Stacey was untiring in his efforts to hunt down absentees from school, and in this manner we were enabled to get a grip of the disease, which we never could have

had had the schools been closed. Unfortunately for us the first cases made their appearance during the holidays, and the disease had a fairly strong hold before the schools re-opened. In this way I have little doubt but that one or more scholars returned to school having had the disease without knowing it, and infected others. Had the schools been open at the time, their absence from school during the initial illness would have been noticed, and the cases traced down.

Food.

No notices have been served under the Dairies, Cowsheds and Milkshops Order during the year, and no action has been taken with respect to tuberculous milk.

Other Foods.

No action has been taken during the year, and I have no reason to think that any action has been necessary.

Sale of Food and Drugs Act.

No action has been taken by the local authority under this Act. The County Council, through their representatives, the police, have taken a few samples. In each case the samples have proved, on examination, to be up to the required standard, and no action has been necessary.

Housing.

During the year the following action has been taken :—

Number of closing orders	...	...	8
Number of closing orders determined			4
Number of new cottages built by private enterprise	...	...	7
Number of new cottages built by Urban District Council	...	...	20

With respect to the houses for which a closing order was obtained, seven of these are situated at the extreme end of Waterside.

I have had these houses under observation for some years, and have put the matter off from time to time on account of the shortage of cottages in your district. In my opinion, they are all quite unfit for human habitation, and I shall be greatly surprised if anything can be done that will render them fit.

The eighth house is a cottage in Red Lion-street, which is now being used as a store, and the closing order has been terminated. The other houses in which the closing order has been determined are three houses in King-street. These were quite unfit for human habitation when the order was obtained, but have since been made habitable. I must admit that I was surprised to see what could be done with this old property. If, as I am informed, results like this can be obtained for quite a small outlay, it certainly behoves us as a sanitary authority to see that the same small outlay is made on some of the other old property in the town. I think we can trust the owners to see that they obtain a fair return for that outlay, judging by the rents charged before and after the alterations.

With regard to the number of houses built by private enterprise (7), only one thing can be said, and that is that it is far too few. If

the private speculator intends stopping, he can hardly consider himself badly treated if the public authorities step in.

The 20 cottages erected in Brockhurst-road are, from a public health point of view, a complete success. The type of house erected is Type B of the Local Government Board Memorandum. Each house contains a large living room, with small scullery, on the ground floor, with three bedrooms above. The contract has apparently been well carried out, and I have no hesitation in saying that, in my opinion, there are no better cottages in the town.

I am informed that the cost of the 20 cottages, including land, law cost, and incidental expenses, is £4,099/5/4, making an average cost per cottage of £204/19/-.

The cottages are let at an inclusive rent of 5/- per week. This includes General District, Water, and Poor Rates. I must say I should have preferred to see the rent a little lower than it is, but I believe it would have been quite impossible to fix a lower figure and at the same time make the scheme self-supporting. All the cottages were let as soon as building operations were complete.

There is still a great shortage of cottages in the town, and had we been living in normal times this year, it was my intention to suggest that the time was now ripe for you, as a Council, to start preparing a scheme by means of which blocks of cottages of a like nature might be erected in other parts of your area. That they are required I am certain, and that they would be welcomed by the inhabitants of your district I know from conversation that I have had with those who would be tenants. As to the wisdom or possibility of building at the present time I must leave that for you to decide. All I can do is to say that they are wanted, and leave it at that.

There is still a considerable amount of overcrowding in your district, but owing to the shortage of cottages one is compelled to shut one's eyes to all but the very worst cases. From the report of your Sanitary Inspector it will be seen that four statutory notices have been served for it, but apparently in no instance have they been complied with.

The table following report gives the amount of work done by your Inspector under the Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations during the last four years.

From the Inspector's report, which is printed with this, you will see that the whole of the district has now been gone through. There are, of course, still some dark spots which need attention, but under existing circumstances one is compelled to move very slowly and wait for the time when the supply of cottages is equal to the demand.

Sanitary Administration of the District Staff.

I must again place on record the good work done by your Sanitary Inspector (Mr. Stacey) during the year. I am more than satisfied with his method of working, while, as to the actual work done, his reports as Sanitary Inspector and Inspector under the Town Planning Act speak for themselves.

I am aware that his salary has been increased during the twelve months, but in my opinion he is well worthy of more than he is at present receiving. I am sure you will have difficulty in replacing him should he, owing to the inducement held out in the way of a larger remuneration by some other body, think it his duty to his home to resign.

Hospital Accommodation.

The Isolation Hospital in the Vale has not been opened during the year, but has been kept under observation and ready for any emergency. In my opinion this is all that is required under existing circumstances, but I still look forward to the time when a larger institution for combined districts, with separate blocks for each disease, will be made possible. Until this is an accomplished fact I am convinced that the isolation in so small a district as this will never be anything but a makeshift.

Method of Dealing with Infectious Disease.

No alteration has been made in this since my report of 1911. As I wrote very fully on our method in that report, I would refer any who are interested in this matter to what I then said.

Notifications.

During the year I have received 108 notifications under the Infectious Diseases Notification Act, as against 71 last year.

This increase is due to the outbreak of scarlet fever during the months of August and September. This is partly counter-balanced by a considerable decrease in the number of cases of tuberculosis, both pulmonary and otherwise, notified.

The notification is as follows, with the attack rate as compared with the two preceding years —

	Cases	Attack rate	Attack rate	Attack rate
	1914	1912	1913	1914
Diphtheria	3	.37	.36	.35
Erysipelas	4	.61	.84	.47
Scarlet Fever	77	.24	1.68	9.18
Enteric Fever	1	—	.24	.11
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	14	—	2.28	1.66
Other forms of Tuberculosis	8	—	2.40	.95
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	1	—	—	.11

Scarlet Fever.

It will be noticed that more notifications of this disease have been received than has been the case for the last 10 years. In the years 1903 and 1904 I received 167 and 69 notifications respectively, while for the next eight years the total notifications for this disease only amount to 67. You will naturally ask how can I account for this, and to what do I attribute it. I attribute the increase in numbers to two things. First, that during the year 1914 we had to deal with two separate outbreaks of the disease, and, secondly, that in each case the outbreak had got a pretty sure hold before any measures could be taken to put it under control.

Our first outbreak was handed on to us from the previous year. In my report for the year

1913 I drew your attention to this outbreak, which commenced on December 8th, and gave what I considered the cause of it, and how it might have been avoided. Cases continued to be notified from this date until the end of March—in all, nine cases. From the end of March to June we remained free, but during this month three cases were notified. Each of these cases was undoubtedly imported; in each case the patient was brought into the town and developed the disease before the incubation period for the disease had passed.

From this date we remained free again until the month of August, with the exception of one solitary case at the end of July. Soon after the Whitehill school had started I began to receive notifications of scarlet fever among scholars from that school. On making inquiries it was then found that these children had, during the holidays, been playing with children who had come into the town from London, under the Children's Fresh Air Movement, two of whose hands were said to have been peeling. On making inquiries of the child who was taken ill on July 28th, I found that she too had been playing with the same children. These children had of course long since returned to Town, so there was no chance of confirming the diagnosis, but I am convinced in my own mind that what happened was that in the latter part of July others contracted the disease beside the one case that was notified, and, having it very slightly, nothing was heard of it. These cases going to school as soon as it opened spread the disease to others.

During this period a rather peculiar thing occurred, you as a Council taking action against a person for exposing his child, who was suffering from scarlet fever, to the danger of others without your Medical Officer having seen or had anything to do with it. The case happened in this way. The schoolmaster found a boy peeling in school, and showed him to the Sanitary Inspector. The boy was sent to his home, which is in an adjoining district, and the Medical Officer of Health for that district communicated with by your Sanitary Inspector, who certified the case as one of scarlet fever, and suggested that medical advice should be sought. This apparently was not done, but the child was again sent to school in what was thought to be still an infectious condition. Under these circumstances you as a Council took proceedings against the parent, with the result that he was fined £2 and costs. Your thanks are, I think, due to Dr. New, the Medical Officer of Health to the Amersham Rural District Council, for the action he took in the matter, also to Mr. Dodd, the head master of Whitehill school, for his care in hunting out suspected cases. Personally, I am grateful to all teachers in the elementary schools for the care they exercise in this particular. I am informed that all at Townsend-road school were most persistent in hunting for the case that did not arrive. Apparently they took to heart rather my remarks of last year, and thought them a reflection on this school. On the school perhaps they may have been, but certainly not on the teachers, who have always been most helpful in tracing down these cases.

All cases of scarlet fever were isolated at their own homes.

Erysipelas.

Four cases were notified during the year, as against seven last.

Diphtheria.

Three cases were notified during the year.

I was quite unable to find any cause for the two cases that occurred in Church-street during the month of April. Both children fell ill at the same time, and were known to be always about together, so the inference is that both contracted the disease from the same source. In each case swabs were taken and submitted to the Clinical Research Association at the Council's expense, and in each case a positive result was obtained. The Urban District Council also paid for the anti-diphtheria serum which was used in these cases. The third case, which occurred in the month of October, was an imported case in a visitor to the town. All these cases were isolated at home.

Small Pox.

No cases have occurred in the district during the year, and vaccination is still a dead letter.

Enteric Fever.

One notification only has been received during the year. Acting on your instruction, I made arrangements for this case to be received into the London Fever Hospital, the Council paying all expenses.

Puerperal Fever.

I have received no notification of this disease during the year, but I find it mentioned in the returns received, in which are given the causes of death.

Acute Poliomyelitis.

No case has been notified during the year.

Cerebro-spinal Fever.

No cases have been notified during the year.

Ophthalmia Neonatorum.

I have received one notification during the year.

Tuberculosis.

I am pleased to report a very satisfactory falling off in the number of notifications of this disease during the year. During the year 1913 thirty-eight cases in all were notified, while during 1914 twenty-six only were reported. It seems that there is at present a steady decline in the number of cases, and I trust it may continue.

During the year the County Council have opened a tuberculous dispensary in Blucher-street. As far as one can judge at present, the scheme, as far as Chesham is concerned, is working admirably. I have experienced no difficulty in getting patients to present themselves there for examination, but I must say that, in my opinion, this is due in a great measure to the personality of the Tuberculosis Officer, Dr. Burra, who visits the dispensary on alternate Fridays, and besides being most helpful in seeing those cases who are able to present themselves there, is always willing to make the journey to any home where the disease may be

known or suspected, if the patient is too ill to travel.

During the year eleven cases of this disease have been sent to sanatoria. Eight of these were treated at the County Sanatorium, and three at the Royal Sea Bathing Infirmary, Margate. I am pleased to report that the majority of patients seem to do remarkably well under the treatment received in both institutions. During the year I attended a meeting of Medical Officers of Health at Wycombe to discuss the question whether it would be possible to formulate a scheme by means of which advanced cases of this disease could receive institutional treatment, and, while quite agreeing that such a scheme is very necessary, I am of opinion that the one suggested would be very difficult, if at all possible, to work. I refer to the suggestion of having three joint small pox hospitals in the county, and using them for these cases if not required otherwise. I quite realise that to put up proper buildings entirely for these cases would be a great expense. The chief difficulty, to my mind, would be the number. One knows that in such cases there can be only one end to the disease, and naturally the friends of the patients would want to be able to visit them as often as possible. As I have heard nothing for some months I presume the question is standing over for a time.

The following table gives the number of diseases notified under the Infectious Diseases Notification Act during the last 10 years, and the average for comparison with this year's figures:—

	Diphtheria	Erysipelas	Pulmonary Tuberculosis	Enteric Fever	Puerperal Fever	Acute Poliomyelitis	Scarlet Fever	Cerebro-Spinal Fever	Tuberculosis other than Pulmonary	Ophthalmia Neonatorum	Total
1904	6	16	-	1	1	-	69	-	-	-	93
1905	9	8	-	-	-	-	11	-	-	-	28
1906	3	6	-	4	-	-	4	-	-	-	17
1907	3	4	-	1	-	-	17	-	-	-	25
1908	9	3	-	-	-	-	5	-	-	-	17
1909	2	7	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	12
1910	-	10	-	-	-	-	8	-	-	-	18
1911	1	4	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-	8
1912	3	5	21	-	-	2	2	-	-	-	33
1913	3	7	24	2	-	-	14	-	20	1	71
Total	39	70	-	8	1	-	136	-	-	-	-
Avg.	3.9	7.0	-	.8	.1	-	13.6	-	-	-	-
	3	4	14	1	-	-	77	-	8	1	108

It will be noticed that the average is not struck in many of these diseases. I have placed them on the table for future reports rather than for any useful purpose to be served at the present time.

Anthrax.

During the year a case of anthrax occurred in a brush outworker. This is, as far as I know, the first case that has occurred in the town during the time I have acted as your medical officer. This being the case, it was difficult to know quite how to act from a public health point of view. Apparently, as far as the factory was concerned, it was the duty of the Home Office, and as Medical Officer of Health I was informed over the telephone that I must not step in and take charge of the bulk of the hair from which the portion handed out to this worker was taken, although perhaps I ought to say that I think the person giving the instructions was perhaps not aware at the time that he was speaking to the Medical Officer of Health as well as the certifying surgeon under the Factory Act.

It has been proposed, owing to the amount of hair that is used in the manufacture of brushes in this district, to include anthrax in the list of notifiable diseases, under the Infectious Diseases Notification Act. This will, I hope, be done during the present year. This being the case, with past experience, I think you may trust your sanitary officers to deal with the cases. My present intention is to deal with the cases; we can leave the question as to whether we are exceeding our duty to fight out with the Home Office officials afterwards.

Population.

In the middle of the year 1913 I estimated the population of Chesham at 8,312; on June 30th, 1914, I estimated it at 8,384, an increase of 72.

Death Rate.

The number of deaths registered during the year as occurring in the district is 82, an increase of .3 on last year's figures, giving a death rate of 9.7 as against 9.4 last year. The number of transferable deaths, that is, deaths of Chesham inhabitants that have occurred in other districts, is 7 as against 19 last year.

The number of deaths occurring and registered in Chesham district of persons residing outside the town boundaries is 5 as against 4 last year. These figures give us a net death rate of 10 as against 11.3 last year. Of the deaths at all ages, I would draw your attention to the following as compared with previous years:

	1905.	1906.	1907.	1908.	1909.	1910.	1911.	1912.	1913.	1914
Pulmonary T.	13	5	7	10	5	13	7	9	7	9
Other Tuber- cular diseases	2	1	5	1	4	2	1	1	6	6
Cancer	...	2	1	5	1	4	7	8	11	6
Influenza	...	10	6	2	7	4	6	—	1	1

It will be noticed that during the ten years there has been a steady increase in the number of deaths certified as being due to cancer.

Birth Rate.

The number of births registered during the year is 171, an increase of 11 on last year's figures. This gives a birth rate of 20.5, as compared with 19.2 last year. One is thankful to see even this little increase, as the falling birth rate for the last ten years has been very consistent.

Infant Mortality.

Of the 82 deaths registered, 10 have been those of children under one year of age, giving an infant mortality of 58.4 per thousand births registered. This is a slight increase in the infant mortality of last year, when 9 deaths were registered with a mortality of 56.2. When one takes into consideration that in five cases out of the ten death was certified as due to premature birth one must consider this a very satisfactory state of things.

In conclusion, I must apologise for the delay in bringing out this report. It is, I know, many weeks later than usual, but the press of work during the early weeks of this year made it quite impossible to proceed with it.

Thanking you for the assistance and support you have given me during the year in carrying out the work.

I am, Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

THOMAS F. LONG,

M.O.H. Chesham U.D.C.

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING DECEMBER 31st, 1914.

Housing, Town Planning, etc., Act, Inspection of District Regulation.

1,322 houses have now been inspected, and this completes the district of all houses under the £16 limit. I think the Council should now consider the advisability of having an inspection made of all the houses in the district irrespective of rental values. Such information should prove to be extremely valuable from the standpoint of health statistics.

We should also be able to see what permanent improvement had been made in the cottage property, and what the tenants had been called upon to pay as their share of the cost in the way of increased rents, or by any other means.

One of the greatest difficulties in dealing with the defects of the older class of cottages is that one hardly knows where to begin or where to leave off, and it is a very difficult matter to put into satisfactory repair some of the old places, the cost being prohibitive.

If the supply of cottages were equal to the demand one would feel more justified in dealing more drastically with such damp, dilapidated and verminous old places.

In several instances tenants have begged me let their cottages remain as they are for fear the landlord should put up the rents. They argue that they are paying quite as much as they can afford, and if the rents are increased the necessities of life must be curtailed.

Whether this is so or not I am not in a position to state, but I can state that the rents charged for some of the old places are very high, considering the accommodation provided and the condition of the places.

In one case the tenant had notice to clear out because the landlord thought she had been

complaining to me about the condition of the house. As this tenant could not obtain another house she begged me not to press the landlord to carry out certain works, and I simply had to shut my eyes for the time.

What is wanted is another 60 to 80 cottages, and the need is urgent.

How or when we are going to get them is the problem.

The private builder has to take into consideration the increased cost of building materials, and he expects, and is justly entitled to, a fair return on the capital he has expended. If he cannot build cottages to let at such rents as the working man can reasonably be expected to pay, then the only solution seems to be for the Council to prepare another scheme for the erection of at least another 50 cottages. If this scheme were put in hand at an early date, it would be ready for starting as soon as loans can be obtained at a reasonable rate of interest.

Perhaps if one takes into consideration the number of houses erected during the past year by private enterprise the difficulty will be more easily recognised.

These have been as follows:—

Over £20 rentals	...	...	2
Over £16 rentals	...	...	5
Under £16 rentals	...	...	7

From information I have been able to gather there is every likelihood of more cottages being erected during the year 1915, several people having informed me that they intend to build cottages during the coming summer.

If these premises mature, then the demand will be partially met, but not to the extent required.

Council's Cottages.

During the year 20 cottages were erected by the Council.

These contain a large living room and a scullery, with 3 good bedrooms. These are let at an inclusive rent of 5/- per week.

The plans and specifications were prepared by Mr. Percy C. Dormer, the Surveyor to the Council.

They are exceedingly well built, and there was no difficulty in obtaining tenants for same.

Several health officials from other districts who inspected these cottages when nearing completion were quite taken with the design, and commented upon the manner in which the best had been made of the space available.

I feel sure that if similar cottages were erected in different parts of the town ready occupants could be found for them.

Eight closing orders have been made during the year. These have not yet been determined.

Of the closing orders made during the previous year, 3 cottages were repaired and 1 converted into a storeroom.

Public Health Acts, 1875-1890.

Number of visits to dwelling-houses and premises	...	...	...	3,955
Nuisances or defects found:—				
Damp walls of dwelling-houses	...			3
Defective walls, ceilings, or floors	...			4
Dirty houses	...	...	...	7
Unsuitable or defective ventilation	...			23
Defective roofs	...	...	...	2

Defective eaves, guttering, fall pipes, etc.	19
Overcrowding	6
Verminous houses	3
Defective fresh air inlets	6
Delapidated w.c.'s	5
Choked or defective drains	22
Broken or dirty sanitary conveniences	7
Defective water fittings in w.c.'s ...	77
Offensive accumulations	9
Defective paving, or drainage of yards	12
Improper keeping of animals	2
Smoke observations	8
Statutory notices	6
Summonses	2

125 letters or preliminary notices have been sent to owners or occupiers where the above defects were found.

With regard to the smoke observations, 4 verbal complaints, 1 preliminary notice, and 1 statutory notice have been made or sent to the offending owners. This is one of those nuisances which we can hardly expect will be remedied as early as we might wish owing to the fuel question, but there certainly ought to be a great improvement in the near future.

At the present time people living in the neighbourhood of one of these shafts cannot have their windows open without the rooms being covered with soot.

The whole nuisance can easily be remedied by using a good class coal instead of the rubbish and slack now used. Health and general comfort of the inhabitants ought to stand before large dividends in such matter.

Of the other statutory notices, 4 were for overcrowding, the other for overcrowding, dirty, damp, dilapidated, and verminous cottages; this related to 3 cottages.

One of the notices relating to overcrowding has not yet been complied with, the occupier not being able to obtain a larger house.

It is only very bad cases of overcrowding that get reported, owing to the great difficulty the tenants have to find larger and suitable houses.

Provision of Ashbins.

During the past three years I have been bringing this matter forward, and although well backed up by the Medical Officer of Health I get no support from the Council to require owners of property to provide suitable receptacles for house refuse.

The receptacles used at the present time are, in many cases, an absolute disgrace to everybody concerned.

As far as I can ascertain not 10 per cent. of the houses erected during the past five years comply with the requirements of Section 35, Public Health Act, 1875, in this respect.

Perhaps I ought to state the fact that the Council have been advised they have no power to compel owners to provide ashbins, although the Amending Act of 1890 is in force.

Infectious Diseases.

Cases notified:—

Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	77
Erysipelas	...	...	...	4
Diphtheria	...	...	...	3
Enteric Fever	...	...	...	1
Ophthalmia Neonatorum	...	...	...	1
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	...	...	...	14

With respect to the scarlet fever cases, our most serious outbreak occurred during the August holidays.

The source of the trouble appears to have been two children from London, who had been sent down into the district suffering from the disease.

The disease, which was of a very slight nature, got a good start before the children returned to school.

As all the infected children attended Whitehill schools I disinfected the whole of the school-rooms, visited all absent scholars, and, with the help and co-operation of the masters and mistresses at the school, we had got the disease well under control by the end of October.

The disease being of such a slight character it was a very difficult matter to persuade that there was any danger of infection. Practically all the cases were isolated in their own homes, only three cases being removed, and in only one instance did we get a second notification in any of the homes after nine days had expired from the first notification.

In the exception we had a second case notified after the previous patient had been set free three days. This looks as though I had not thoroughly disinfected the rooms.

As far as our own district is concerned, all cases, or suspected cases, were kept under control, but in the case of children living in the rural district, who attended the school, we of course had no control. In all such suspected cases I notified the Medical Officer of Health for the district, who took charge.

Unfortunately in one of these cases the parents ignored all advice and one child was sent back to school in peeling stage. The facts were reported to the rural authority, who, however, refused to take any action in the matter, and we took the matter up. A summons was issued for exposing this child, the parent being fined £2 and £3 0 6 costs. These proceedings were undertaken as a warning to other parents, and there is not the slightest doubt but what it produced the desired effect.

Slaughterhouses.

Number on the register	...	...	...	8
Number of visits made	...	...	...	165
Carcases examined...	...	...	...	399
Oxen	...	...	...	121
Sheep	...	...	...	168
Pigs	...	...	...	103
Calves	...	...	...	7

Voluntary surrenders have been as follows :—

Beef: 1 whole carcase and offal; bullock's tongue; two portions of forequarters. These were affected by tuberculosis.

Two heads affected by actinomycosis were also destroyed.

Pigs: 1 whole carcase and offal, inflammation; 1 head, tubercular glands; 1 liver, echinococcus cysts.

It is quite impossible under present circumstances to examine all carcases killed in the slaughterhouses, when one considers that about a thousand beasts, and about 2,500 sheep, besides a large number of pigs and calves, are killed and dressed every year, and killing goes on at all hours in the various slaughterhouses.

The majority of the slaughterhouses are very old, and one is quite unsuitable for a slaughterhouse owing to its position, but, speaking generally, the occupiers keep the places clean and tidy, any request to lime-wash being readily complied with.

The quality of the meat killed in the district is good.

Bakehouses.

Number on Register	...	...	...	14
Number of visits made	...	...	...	41
Requests to lime-wash	...	...	...	14

Common Lodging-houses.

Number on register	...	...	...	2
Number of visits made	...	...	...	7

One verbal request to lime wash was attended to.

I am sorry to state that one of these places is not so clean as it should be. On two occasions I have had to complain of vermin, and upon one other occasion had to send a rather strong letter of complaint upon the same subject.

Upon my next two visits after this letter was sent, the place was far cleaner, and no vermin were seen.

Dairies, Cowsheds, and Milkshops.

Number of dairymen and purveyors on Register	...	...	...	...	22
Number of cowkeepers	...	...	...	...	9
Number of visits to cowsheds	...	...	...	...	30
Number of visits to dairies and purveyors' premises	...	...	...	...	40
Number of requests to lime wash cowsheds	...	...	...	...	7
Number of purveyors who live outside the district	...	...	...	...	6

No cowkeepers, dairymen or purveyors have been registered during the year.

Factory and Workshops Act.

Number of factories on Register	...	...	...	56
Number of workshops	...	...	...	54
Number of visits made	...	...	...	93
Complaints received from H.M. Inspector of factories relating to defective water fittings in w.c.'s	...	...	...	1
Choked w.c. drains	...	...	...	2
Insufficient sanitary accommodation	...	...	...	2
Want of lime-washing	...	...	...	3
Occupation of workshops	...	...	...	4
Other matters :—				
Dirty sanitary conveniences	...	...	...	2
Defective flushing arrangements	...	...	...	3
Accumulation of refuse	...	...	...	2
Lists of out workers received	...	...	...	15
Lists sent to other authorities	...	...	...	1

To Dr. Long, your Medical Officer of Health, my very best thanks are tendered. My duties under him have been most pleasant. His help and advice are always available, and he is always ready to share the unpleasant portion of the work which necessarily falls to the lot of sanitary officials.

The amount of extra work that he put in during the fever epidemic in August and September is only known to me, and possibly not by me fully.

All the scholars at the Whitehill Schools were visited several times, all suspicious cases that

I reported to him were examined, and in this way several cases were detected which otherwise might have been missed. My hope is that as long as I remain your Sanitary Inspector, Dr. Long will also remain your Medical Officer of Health.

To the members of the Sanitary Committee and the members of the Council generally my

thanks are also due for their unfailing courtesy, and for the friendly spirit in which controversial matters have been discussed when these have had to be brought forward.

Yours obediently,

HENRY STACEY,
Sanitary Inspector,
Chesham Urban District Council.

Local Government Board Table.

STATEMENT required by Article V of the Housing (Inspection of Districts) Regulations, 1910, in regard to the inspection of dwelling-houses under Section 17 (1) of the Housing, Town Planning Act, 1909.

	1911	1912	1913	1914
Number of dwelling-houses inspected under and for the purposes of the Act	733	223	267	99
Number of such dwelling-houses which were considered to be so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	5	—	1	7
Number of dwelling-houses in respect to which representations were made to the local authority with a view to the making of closing orders	5	—	1	7
Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which closing orders were made by the local authority	—	3	1	7
Number of dwelling-houses, the defects in which were remedied without the making of closing orders ...	Two demolished for street improvements			
Number of dwelling-houses which after the making of closing orders were made fit for human habitation ...	—	—	—	3
General character of defects found :—				
(a) Drainage defects	—	8	7	2
(b) Closet accommodation, insufficient or defective ...	—	2	6	3
(c) Water supply exposed to surface pollution ...	All water supplied by Council's mains.			
(d) Insufficient circulation of air	45	9	59	41
(e) Dampness	239	94	58	32
(f) Insufficient light	26	—	4	5
(g) Dirty by landlord's default	354	57	83	40
(h) Dirty by tenant's default	—	—	4	—
(i) Dirty by default of landlord and tenant	—	—	4	—
(j) Insufficient paving	—	18	4	27
(k) Deficient method of refuse disposal	220	223	267	99
(l) Internal defects, walls, ceilings, floors	103	21	68	39
(m) Defective roofs or gutters and down pipes ...	—	58	42	32

TABLE I.

Vital Statistics of Whole District during 1914 and previous Years.

Year.	Population estimated to Middle of each Year.	Births.			Total Deaths Registered in the District.		Transferable Deaths		Net Deaths belonging to the District.			
		Un-corrected number.	Net.				of Non-residents registered in the District.	of Residents not registered in the District.	Under 1 yr. of age.		At all ages.	
			Number	Rate.	Number.	Rate per 1,000 Nett Births.			Number.	Rate.		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
1909	8061	178	178	22.0	95	11.1	1	13	21	117.9	107	13.2
1910	8156	181	181	21.2	86	10.5	1	11	9	49.7	96	11.7
1911	8192	162	162	19.7	87	10.6	1	18	12	74.0	104	12.6
1912	8251	164	164	19.8	92	11.1	—	12	17	103.6	104	12.5
1913	8312	158	160	19.2	79	9.4	4	19	9	56.2	94	11.3
1914	8384	171	172	20.5	82	9.7	5	7	10	58.1	84	10.0

TABLE II.

Cases of Infectious Disease notified during the year 1914.

NOTIFIABLE DISEASE.	NUMBER OF CASES NOTIFIED.								TOTAL CASES RE-MOVED TO HOS-PITAL.
	At all Ages.	At Ages—Years.							
		Under 1.	1 and under 5 years.	5 and under 15 years.	15 and under 25 years.	25 and under 45 years.	45 and under 65 years.	65 and upwards.	
Small-pox	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cholera (C) Plague (P) ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Diphtheria (including Mem-branous croup)	3	—	1	2	—	—	—	—	—
Erysipelas	4	—	—	—	2	—	—	2	—
Scarlet Fever	77	—	14	50	10	2	1	—	—
Typhus Fever	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Enteric Fever	1	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
Relapsing Fever (R) Continued Fever (C)	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Puerperal Fever	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cerebro-spinal Meningitis ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Poliomyelitis	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ophthalmia Neonatorum ...	1	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Pulmonary Tuberculosis ...	16	—	—	1	1	11	2	1	8
Other forms of Tuberculosis	10	—	2	3	3	1	—	1	3
Totals	112	1	17	56	17	14	3	4	12

TABLE IV.

Infant Mortality.

1914. Net Deaths from stated causes at various Ages under 1 Year of Age.

Causes of Death.	Under 1 week.	1-2 weeks.	2-3 weeks.	3-4 weeks.	Total under 4 weeks.	4 weeks and under 3 months.	3 months and under 6 months.	6 months and under 9 months.	9 months and under 12 months.	Total Deaths under 1 year.
Tuberculous Meningitis ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Abdominal Tuberculosis ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1
Pneumonia (all forms) ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Enteritis	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Syphilis	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
Premature birth	5	—	—	—	5	—	—	—	—	5
Totals	5	—	—	—	5	1	1	1	2	10

TABLE III.
Causes of, and Ages at Death during the Year 1914.

CAUSES OF DEATH.	Net Deaths at the subjoined ages of "Residents" whether occurring within or without the District (a).									Total Deaths of residents or non-residents in institutions in the district (b).
	All Ages.	Under 1 year.	1 and under 2 years.	2 and under 5 years.	5 and under 15 years.	15 and under 25 years.	25 and under 45 years.	45 and under 65 years.	65 and upwards.	
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
All causes { Certified (c) ...	77	10	1	1	4	2	12	18	29	—
{ Uncertified ...	5	—	—	1	—	—	2	1	1	—
Enteric Fever	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Small-pox	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Measles	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Scarlet Fever	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Whooping Cough	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Diphtheria and Croup	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Influenza	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Erysipelas	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Phthisis	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
(Pulmonary Tuberculosis)	9	—	—	—	—	2	6	1	—	—
Tuberculous Meningitis	4	1	—	—	3	—	—	—	—	1
Other Tuberculous Diseases	2	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	1
Cancer, Malignant Disease	11	—	—	—	—	—	—	6	5	—
Rheumatic Fever	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—
Meningitis	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Organic Heart Disease	5	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	3	1
Bronchitis	10	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	8	1
Pneumonia (all forms)	5	1	—	—	—	—	1	2	1	1
Other Diseases of Respiratory Organs	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—
Diarrhoea and Enteritis	4	1	1	—	—	—	1	—	1	—
Appendicitis and Typhlitis	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	1
Cirrhosis of Liver	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—
Alcoholism	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Nephritis and Bright's Disease	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	1	—
Puerperal Fever	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—	—	—
Other Accidents & Diseases of Pregnancy and Parturition	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Congenital Debility and Malformation, including Premature Birth	5	5	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Violent Deaths, excluding Suicide	1	—	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	1
Suicide	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Other Defined Diseases	14	1	—	—	1	—	1	1	10	2
Diseases ill-defined or unknown	2	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	—	—
Totals	82	10	1	2	4	2	14	19	30	10



